

Rotation of the Nucleus of Comet 46P/Wirtanen

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Observations were obtained of comet 46P/Wirtanen using the UH 2.2m telescope and the TEK 2K CCD camera on the nights of 1996 August 17 and 18 UT, with the goal of examining the rotation period of the nucleus. On the first night 28 images were obtained for a total integration time of 16,800 sec between 8:00 - 13:33 UT, and on night 2, 18 images were obtained for a total integration time of 10,800 between 07:42 and 12:07 UT. Observing was prematurely terminated on night 2 because of high humidity. Preliminary data reduction indicates a rotational period near 6 hours based on the data from 17 August, with a range near 0.06 mag in the R filter. However, there was significant coma present. We will present composite images of the comet to ascertain the extent of the dust coma, and will present the results of period searches.

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